

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

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2 A telecommunications system has a source base station ( $BS_S$ ) and a destination  
3 base station ( $BS_D$ ), and a handover unit (100) having a dynamic offset threshold  
4 determination unit (102) which establishes a dynamic offset threshold for starting soft  
5 handover. When the dynamic offset threshold for soft handover is exceeded, a  
6 preliminary portion of a handover sequence is initiated at the destination base station.  
7 The preliminary portion of the handover sequence is initiated so that time-critical  
8 handover sequence activities (such as L1 uplink synchronization) are well underway, if  
9 not completed, by the time the soft handover is actually needed.

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